

Caregiver Connection

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A monthly publication for Washington state foster and adoptive families and relative caregivers.
WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES, CHILDREN'S ADMINISTRATION

Getting by with a little help from my friends

The transition from youth to adult can be difficult for anyone, so when help is available, it can make a big difference. Below are two articles written by young people currently making the transition. They clearly value the relationships built along their journey. Their stories remind us in this New Year about the importance of staying connected and the commitment to make a difference in other's lives. Jemila Lee Booker, is a long-time member of Passion to Action, the foster youth alumni board. Tim Bell, is a foster youth alumni who has received his college degree.

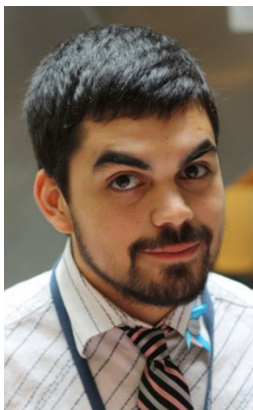


By Jemila Lee Booker

You may have heard about Children's Administration's statewide Youth Advisory Board "Passion to Action" and wondered what they are all about. We are a statewide foster youth and alumni advisory board developed by Children's Administration in partnership with Casey Family Programs and the College Success Foundation. We provide Children's Administration with input and recommendations regarding their policy and practices. We do an array of things such as sit on advisory boards, workgroups, committees, etc. We do presentations to CA and other community partners on issues relating to foster care. We also give feedback on brochures, websites, etc...pretty much making sure that the foster youth voice is incorporated into all aspects of foster care.

I was in this group since the day it was formed (April 1, 2005) and it has been such a journey for me. All the members became not only my friends but part of my extended family. They have watched me grow as I have done the same for them. We all have a bond and connection that is indescribable and no matter what our stories are, we all had something in common about our experience. Although we have had members come and go we bond just as strongly with the new members. There are no groups – we are just one big family. We all have a passion to use our expertise to make life better for us and our other extended family in foster care. Through Passion to Action I have found a voice not only for myself but for those who cannot speak and I know that each member has had the same, if not similar experience.

If you know a youth or young adult who has experienced foster care who would like to develop their leadership skills, this is a great group to get involved with. E-mail ilskids@dshs.wa.gov for more information.



By Tim Bell

You spend your whole life in transition: tired to refreshed; fulfilled to anxious; unemployed to employed; poor to middle class; young, selfish lay-about with no goals or roles and responsibilities to frantic working mother doing everything she can to keep her and her loved one's lives together. Obviously, some transitions are worse than others- living to dying, for example, is a particularly rough transition. The transition I want to point at now though lies somewhere in the middle of the mundane (hungry to not hungry) to the extraordinary (cancerous cells to new and healthy cells). The transition might best be labeled as youth to adult and it's one well studied and written about often in literature. For those of us from the foster care system though, youth to adult has less of a *Catcher in the Rye* or *Breakfast Club* feel to it and more of an "Oh my god, where am I going to sleep, where did all of my family photos go, I wish I knew who and how to ask for help" sort of feel to it. To clarify, what I'm saying is that the location of anxiety for youth in care can be just a little bit different than it is for transitioning youth in the general population.

How long does this transition take? For me, the transition took all 4 years that I was in college (5 if you count the year that I spent after college doing nothing particularly productive). The reason I knew that I was transitioning into an adult was because of all of the talk from my fellow class mates about how, now that college was ending, it was time to go into the 'real world'. After trying to figure out what the 'real world' was, I realized that what everyone meant was that they were transitioning into adulthood. The sad truth of the matter though is that college is a luxury and most youth to adult's from care won't have the four-or-more year transition cushion that I had.

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I know it seems like I'm in the process of painting a gloom and doom picture for you so at least allow me to give that portrait a gilded frame to hang on by sharing the secret of my success: Relationships. "Relationships" is probably too broad of a term though so I'll narrow it down with examples: When I was 18, my mentor connected me with a housing resource that allowed me to continue on in college; my older brother (a foster brother) regularly maintains my car; a group that I was introduced to and allowed to participate in by my foster parents when

I was 17 led to my being one of the few of my friends that has a steady, moderately well paying job seven years later; Now, at 24, my foster parents tell me that they are proud of me and I believe it because they've been there since I was 12. To me, those stories constitute being in Relationship; they constitute living in a part of a community where we can all pool and share our resources and love. Surprisingly, this is all anyone really needs. – Tim grew up in foster care from 12-18. After graduating high school and college, he now works as an educational advocate for youth in care.

Honoring those who work for children



Edith Owen

The third annual Night of a Thousand Dreams will be held January 16 and for the first time, those who work in the field of kinship care will be honored along with those who work in foster care. This ceremony will be held as part of the first annual Pacific Northwest Caregivers Conference, at Great Wolf Lodge south of Olympia.

A new kinship award, the Edith Owen Award, will be presented to Ms. Owen, the recently retired "matriarch" of the kinship care community. Ms. Owen will receive the award named in her honor. Also receiving this award is Hilari Hauptman, Kinship and Family Caregiver Program Manager for Aging and Disability Services Administration of DSHS. Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, the two have worked together on many initiatives to support relatives caring for children.

Starting out with "nobody having any idea what we were getting into," Edith took her job with the Pierce County Tacoma Health Department and slowly built it into a statewide network of support for relative caregivers.

Working with Hilari and many others, she built support groups, testified before the legislature and Congress, was instrumental in Kinship Day declared by Governor Gary Locke, created Kinship Navigators to help caregivers find support within the system and helped create the statewide Kinship Care Oversight Committee. She built alliances everywhere she went and transmitted the knowledge she gained in her on the job training to help others. "She was a great mentor, educator," Hilari said. Hilari herself has worked tirelessly to build a tight-knit web of support around caregivers.

Rep. Eric Pettigrew will be honored as an elected official whose work has supported both children and relative caregivers. Attorney General Rob McKenna, who will serve as master of ceremonies with his wife Marilyn, will also be honored for his work with children.

Shelly Willis, executive director of the Family Education and Support Services, serving Thurston, Lewis, and Mason counties, will be honored for the many services her agency has long provided for kinship care.

Among others who will be recognized for their work:

- Peggy Hays, Children's Administration (CA) Program Consultant – Vancouver
- Michelle Cutlip, CA Resource Family Training Institute Trainer – Spokane
- Terry Lockett, CA Program Consultant – Yakima
- Lisa Powers, CA Supervisor – Everett
- Jody Sheridan, CA social worker – Tacoma
- Steve Overton, CA social worker – Vancouver
- Mel Curtis, President, Gateways For Youth and Families – Tacoma
- Sergeant Ed Troyer, Foster/Adoptive parent and Pierce County Sheriff's Sergeant
- The Lewis County Foster Parents Association
- Stephanie Swallow, Foster Parent and Fostering Together Supervisor, Region 2 South

Congratulations to all the winners.

Just call me Partner!



Partner the parrot!

Over the past two months, Caregiver Connection readers have been submitting names for the Name the Parrot Contest. The parrot will serve as mascot reminding caregivers to ask about the next court date for their children.

From the many entries received, the name Partner was chosen, to emphasize the work caregivers and social workers do together for the benefit of children in their care.

The winning entry was submitted by Kristin Otoupalik of Spokane. Congratulations, Kristin and thanks to all who participated, and remember what Partner would say "Ask about the court date!"



Taking a **bite** out of dental problems

The Washington State Department of Health has new oral health prevention materials on their web site that is helpful to families. Spanish materials will be posted soon.

Oral Health Is Essential

Oral health promotion cards for infants, children, adolescents and children with special needs, are helpful to health professionals, community programs and caregivers. The website includes fact sheets for mild to moderate manifestations of a number of special needs conditions to help parents and caregivers access dental care.

Click here to access the material <http://doh.wa.gov/cfh/oralhealth/education/promocards.htm>

The Center for Pediatric Dentistry: How to get care and the care we provide

The Center for Pediatric Dentistry in King County provides comprehensive dental care to children of all ages - even before a tooth can be seen in the mouth. The Center for Pediatric Dentistry provides expert care to children with special needs.

Make an appointment: 206-543-5800

Visit our website: <http://www.thecenterforpediatricdentistry.com/>

Both our Front Desk and Clinic Staff will ask for information that will help us provide the best dental care possible. We accept many types of dental insurance including Medicaid. Social Workers are available to help caregivers navigate the often confusing network of agencies and regulations. Parents, caregivers and children living with relatives are encouraged to ask all the questions you like so they can best meet the needs of your child. This service is available for children across the state, not just King County.

The Center for Pediatric Dentistry is a collaboration of the University of Washington and Seattle Children's and is located at: 6222 NE 74th Street Seattle, 98115.

The contact person for the above information is:

Kimberly Hanson Huggins RDH, BS

Outreach Manager, Department of Pediatric Dentistry

Phone: 206-616-6105

Bellingham office partners with the Lummi Nation to bring cultural events to children in out of home care

The Bellingham office has partnered with the Lummi Nation's Children's Services to create quarterly cultural events on the Lummi reservation for Lummi children in out of home care and their caregivers. These events will provide educational and cultural opportunities for non-native caregivers of Lummi children, promote positive cultural activities on the Lummi reservation for the children to preserve and strengthen their tribal connections.

In May, the first event held was held at the Lummi Nation Academy. The youth attending school at the Academy prepared and served dinner to the 136 participants. Words of support were expressed by



Darrel Hillaire, Heather Jefferson, Danita Washington, and Charlene

Casimir from the Lummi Nation. Charlene Casimir also sang a welcome song, and elders drummed and shared traditional stories. One adult observing the event reported afterwards "it brought tears to my eyes to watch those little feet of our children keep time to the music of our tribe."

Greetings were exchanged between non-native caregivers, tribal leaders, elders, staff from the Lummi Children's Services and Children's Administration. Books about the history of the Lummi People were distributed to everyone in attendance. The children received T-shirts and tribal coloring books. A drawing was held to give away two blankets to the caregivers before the event was closed by tribal leader Darrell Hillaire with a prayer circle.

Links to resources and information

Here are some links you may find useful and interesting:

Getting the most out of parent teacher conferences

http://www.governor.wa.gov/oeo/publications/005_english.pdf

Post adoption resources

<http://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov/index.cfm?event=website.viewArticles&issueid=130&articleid=3306>

Grandparents raising grandkids

<http://www.columbian.com/news/2011/nov/01/second-parenthood-a-grand-challenge/>



Washington State's Kinship Navigators

Serving grandparents and relatives raising children

SOUTHEAST WASHINGTON

Asotin, Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Garfield, Kittitas, Yakima, and Walla Walla Counties: Catholic Family and Child Services – Yakima
KINSHIP NAVIGATOR: Mary Pleger, mpleger@ccyakima.org;
509-965-7100 or 1-800-246-2962

Benton, Franklin, Columbia, Garfield, Walla Walla, and Asotin Counties Counties

KINSHIP NAVIGATOR: (Also Spanish Speaking)
Tina Khabir*, tkhabir@ccyakima.org; 509-946-4645, Ext. 2021

Yakima and Kittitas Counties

KINSHIP NAVIGATOR: Mary Pleger, mpleger@ccyakima.org;
509-965-7100 or 1-800-246-2962

Yakama Nation: Yakama Nation Area Agency on Aging

KINSHIP NAVIGATOR: Karen Cummings*, kcummings@yakama.com;
509-865-1454

*Funded by Federal Family Connections Grant

CENTRAL WASHINGTON

Chelan, Douglas, Okanogan, Grant, Lincoln, and Adams Counties: Catholic Family and Child Services

KINSHIP NAVIGATOR: Jennifer Santillan, jsantillan@ccyakima.org;
1-509-662-6761, Ext. 4557 or 1-800-261-1094

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

Clark, Cowlitz, Klickitat, Skamania, Wahkiakum Counties: Children's Home Society, Southwest Washington region

KINSHIP NAVIGATOR: Tammy Bedlion, Tammyb@chs-wa.org;
360-695-1325, Ext. 4214

EASTERN WASHINGTON

Ferry, Pend Oreille and Stevens Counties: Rural Resources

KINSHIP NAVIGATOR: Vicki Pontecorvo, vpontecorvo@ruralresources.org;
509-684-3932 (part-time)

Spokane County: Elder Services – Spokane Mental Health

KINSHIP NAVIGATOR: Angela Andreas, aandreas@smhca.org;
509-458-7450, Ext. 3007

Whitman County: Council on Aging and Human Services

KINSHIP NAVIGATOR: Amanda Rich, coaamanda@qwestoffice.net;
509-397-4305, Ext. 102

PUGET SOUND

King County: Senior Services of Seattle – King County

KINSHIP NAVIGATOR: Helen Sawyer, helens@seniorservices.org;
206-727-6264

Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties: Family Education and Support Services

KINSHIP NAVIGATOR: Lynn Urvina, KinNavigator@qwestoffice.net;
360-754-7629 or 1-877-813-2828

SPANISH SPEAKING NAVIGATOR: Rosa Venancio,

fessassist@qwestoffice.net; 360-754-7629 or 1-877-813-2828

Pierce County: HopeSparks

KINSHIP NAVIGATOR: Rosalyn Alber, ralber@hopesparks.org;
253-565-4484, Ext. 105

KINSHIP NAVIGATOR: Jessie Holden, jholden@hopesparks.org;
253-565-4484, Ext. 104

NORTHWEST WASHINGTON

Whatcom County: Northwest Regional Council (AAA)

KINSHIP NAVIGATOR: Laina Berry, BerryLS@dshs.wa.gov; 360-676-6749
(part-time)

STATE CONTACT

Hilari Hauptman, Aging and Disability Services Administration, DSHS,
Hilari.hauptman@dshs.wa.gov; 1-800-422-3263 or 360-725-2556

KINSHIP CARE IN WASHINGTON STATE WEBSITE

www.dshs.wa.gov/kinshipcare

Important contact information for caregivers of children in out-of-home care

Foster parents can use these resources to find support in the valuable work they do. Other resources are located on the Children's Administration foster parent web page:

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/>

FOSTER PARENT AND CAREGIVER CRISIS AND SUPPORT LINE: 1-800-301-1868

ON-GOING / CRISIS SUPPORTS FOR FOSTER PARENTS

Three private agencies work as contractors with CA to build supports for foster parents. Hubs, support groups, and matching new foster parents with veteran foster parents are part of their work to help sustain our caregivers. They also work as liaison to help resolve issues between caregivers and CA staff. Find connections by your county:

REGION 1 North

Dru Powers (dru.powers@juno.com) 509-928-6697

Adams, Asotin, Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pen Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Whitman

REGION 1 South

Lila Rose (lrose@lcsnw.org) 509-969-8554

Rosy Nechodom, (rnechodom@lcsnw.org) 509-619-4035

Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Kittitas, Klickitat, Yakima, Walla Walla

REGION 2 North

Shala Crow (fosterhearts@hotmail.com) 360-220-3785

Island, San Juan, Skagit Snohomish, Whatcom

REGION 2 South

Stephanie Swallow (ptlswallow@comcast.net) 206-850-4520

King

REGION 3 North

Elizabeth Griffin Hall (elizanngriffin@aol.com)

Lyn Okarski (FosterCarerNet@aol.com) 253-472-9252

Kitsap, Pierce

REGION 3 South

Monica Davis (mdavis@lcsnow.org) 360-430-1510

Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Lewis, Mason Pacific, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum

FPAWS: Foster Parent Association of Washington State

FPAWS is an all volunteer, non-profit association, led by experienced caregivers who provide support and helpful services to all caregivers (foster, adoptive, and kinship) in Washington State. In addition, FPAWS advocates for caregivers with Washington's legislative officials, all levels of Children's Administration staff and other community service providers to enhance the child welfare system. Contact FPAWS at www.fpaws.org or 1-800-391-CARE (2273).

Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team (FIRST)

FIRST provides support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect. Phone: 253-219-6782 Monday - Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., If no answer, please leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Fostering Well-Being Care Coordination Unit (FWB CCU)

FWB CCU can help answer health-related questions or help you with health related issues for children/youth in your care. Contact information: 1-800-422-3263 or 360-725-2626 (8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) or e-mail: dhsfwbccu@dshs.wa.gov. Please take care not to include any identifying information about a child unless sent through an encrypted/secure e-mail account.

Foster Parent Consultation Team

The following are the representatives of the Foster Parent Consultation Team:

REGION 1 NORTH

Cindy Gardner	rc.gardner@comcast.net	h: 509-928-2040	c: 509-714-6961
Ginger Schutt	Fosmom09@comcast.net	509-230-4058	

REGION 1 SOUTH

Victoria Erwin	Victoriaerwin9@yahoo.com	509-386-2423	
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REGION 2 NORTH

Debra Ellsworth	dkfoster3@gmail.com	360-941-2244	
Shala Crow	fosterhearts@hotmail.com	360-220-3785	

REGION 2 SOUTH

Tess Thomas	TMT3000@aol.com	206-371-0974	
Talya Miller	mytie5683@aol.com	206-786-1491	

REGION 3 NORTH

Elizabeth Griffin Hall	elizanngriffin@aol.com	h: 360-876-7515	w: 253-473-9252
Josh Hinman	fostercare4kids@gmail.com	360-536-3205	

REGION 3 SOUTH

Amy Gardner	michaelamy52@msn.com	360-200-2102	
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